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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/758,636	01/15/2004	Hui-Quan Han	01017/35966C	6114

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EXAMINER

SLOBODYANSKY, ELIZABETH

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1652

DATE MAILED: 06/30/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

**Office Action Summary**

Application No.

10/758,636

Applicant(s)

HAN ET AL.

Examiner

Elizabeth Slobodyansky, PhD

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 May 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8, 10, 11, 46-48 and 59-64 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 61-64 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8, 10, 11, 46-48, 59 and 60 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 15 January 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>4/30/04</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

### DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-8, 10, 11, 46-48 and 59-64 are pending.

### *Election/Restrictions*

Applicant's election with traverse of Group I, claims 1-8, 10, 11, 46-48, 59 and 60, in the reply filed on May 11, 2006 (page 1) is acknowledged.

The traversal is on the ground(s) that "There would be no serious search burden on the examiner if Groups I and II were examined simultaneously" (page 1). It is agreed that inventions I and II are related as product and process of use. The inventions can be shown to be distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with another materially different product or (2) the product as claimed can be used in a materially different process of using that product (MPEP § 806.05(h)). In the instant case a nucleic acid encoding polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:4 can be used in any of hybridization methods of Group II as well as for the production of a huE3 $\alpha$  polypeptide in a method of Group I, for example. Examination of both Group I and Group II would require search of additional class/subclasses such as 435/6, for example, that is not required for the search for Group I.

Furthermore, with regards to all and any of process claims, Applicants are reminded that "**Process claims that depend from or otherwise include all the limitations of the patentable product** will be entered as a matter of right if the

amendment is presented prior to final rejection or allowance, whichever is earlier”  
(Office action mailed November 14, 2005, pages 4-5).

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

Claims 61-64 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected Group II, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicant timely traversed the restriction (election) requirement in the reply filed on May 11, 2006.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 1-8, 10, 11, 46-48, 59 and 60 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

Claim 1(c) is drawn to a nucleotide sequence which hybridizes under highly stringent conditions to the complement of (a) or (b). therefore, the claim is drawn to a highly variable genus of nucleotide sequences encompassing those encoding polypeptides having E3 $\alpha$  ubiquitin ligase activity and polypeptides with an unknown

activity. Claim 2 (b) recites “an allelic or splice variant” of SEQ ID NO:3. Claim 59 recites “polynucleotide encoding the amino acid sequence set put in SEQ ID NO:4 or a fragment, variant or homolog thereof including allelic variants and splice variants thereof”.

The specification teaches only one allele within the scope of the genus, SEQ ID NO:4 encoded by SEQ ID NO:3. There is no description of the mutational sites that exist in nature, and there is no description of how the structure of SEQ ID NO:3 relates to the structure of other allelic or splice variants. The general knowledge in the art concerning allelic and splice variants does not provide any indication of how the structure of one allele is representative of unknown allelic and splice variants. The common attributes of the genus are not described. One of skill in the art would conclude that applicant was not in possession of the claimed genus because a description of only one member of this genus is not representative of the variants of the genus and is insufficient to support the claim.

Claim 3 recites polypeptides having the amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:4 with at least one conservative or any substitution, insertion, deletion, truncation or the combination of the above. The number of said modifications is not limited negating, in effect, the reference to SEQ ID NO:4. Such recitation without the limitation on the number of the modifications fails to provide a sufficient description of the claimed genus of proteins as it merely describes the functional features of the genus without providing any definition of the structural features of the species within the genus.

The Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit has recently held that a “written

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description of an invention involving a chemical genus, like a description of a chemical species, 'requires a precise definition, such as be structure, formula [or] chemical name,' of the claimed subject matter sufficient to distinguish it from other materials."

University of California v. Eli Lilly and Co., 1997 U.S. App. LEXIS 18221, at \*23, quoting Fiers v. Revel, 25 USPQ2d 1601, 1606 (Fed. Cir. 1993) (bracketed material in original).

To fully describe a genus of genetic material, which is a chemical compound, applicants must (1) fully describe at least one species of the claimed genus sufficient to represent said genus whereby a skilled artisan, in view of the prior art, could predict the structure of other species encompassed by the claimed genus and (2) identify the common characteristics of the claimed molecules, e.g., structure, physical and/or chemical characteristics, functional characteristics when coupled with a known or disclosed correlation between function and structure, or a combination of these".

In the instant case, the specification discloses human ubiquitin ligase, huE3 $\alpha$  of SEQ ID NO:4 encoded by SEQ ID NO:3, *supra*. The specification fails to describe any other representative species by any identifying characteristics or properties other than having "an activity of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:4" and fails to provide any structure: function correlation present in all members of the claimed genus.

Therefore, the claims fail to provide an adequate written description of the genus of variant polypeptides of SEQ ID NO:4. One skilled in the art therefore cannot, as one can do with a fully described genus, visualize or recognize the identity of the members of the genus.

Claims not specifically discussed above are rejected as dependent from the rejected base claim.

Claims 1-8, 10, 11, 46-48, 59 and 60 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, because the specification, while being enabling for a nucleotide sequence encoding a polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:4, does not reasonably provide enablement for a nucleotide sequence encoding a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence at least 70, 80, 85, 90% identical to SEQ ID NO:4 and retaining E3 $\alpha$  ubiquitin ligase activity as well as a nucleotide sequence encoding a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence at least 70, 80, 85, 90% identical to SEQ ID NO:4 and retaining E3 $\alpha$  ubiquitin ligase activity, a nucleotide sequence encoding a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence at least 70, 80, 85, 90%, 95%, 96%, 97%, 98% or 99% identical to SEQ ID NO:4 and having no known activity as well as a nucleotide sequence that hybridizes under highly stringent conditions to SEQ ID NO:3 and encoding a polypeptide having no defined activity or having E3 $\alpha$  ubiquitin ligase activity. The specification does not enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, how to make and/or use the invention commensurate in scope with these claims.

Factors to be considered in determining whether undue experimentation is required, are summarized in In re Wands 858 F.2d 731, 8 USPQ2nd 1400 (Fed. Cir. 1988). They include (1) the quantity of experimentation necessary, (2) the amount of direction or guidance presented, (3) the presence or absence of working examples, (4) the nature of the invention, (5) the state of the prior art, (6) the relative skill of those in

the art, (7) the predictability or unpredictability of the art, and (8) the breadth of the claims.

The specification does not support the broad scope of the claims which encompass nucleotide sequence encoding polypeptides having E3 $\alpha$  ubiquitin ligase activity and having an amino acid sequence at least 70, 80, 85, 90% identical to SEQ ID NO:4 or that hybridizes under highly stringent conditions to SEQ ID NO:3 because the specification does not establish: (A) regions of the protein structure which may be modified without affecting E3 $\alpha$  ubiquitin ligase activity; (B) the general tolerance of E3 $\alpha$  ubiquitin ligase to modification and extent of such tolerance; (C) a rational and predictable scheme for modifying any residues in E3 $\alpha$  ubiquitin ligase with an expectation of obtaining the desired biological function; and (D) the specification provides insufficient guidance as to which of the essentially infinite possible choices is likely to be successful.

Furthermore, with regard to the naturally occurring proteins, while recombinant hybridization techniques are known, only highly homologous sequences can be identified using a given sequence. The state of the art provides no reasonable expectation of success in obtaining a nucleotide sequence encoding a E3 $\alpha$  ubiquitin ligase and having an unknown identity to SEQ ID NO:4 and the result of such screening is unpredictable.

Without sufficient guidance, beyond that provided, obtaining a nucleotide sequence encoding a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence at least 70, 80, 85, 90% identical to SEQ ID NO:4 or having no known percent identity to SEQ ID NO:4 and

retaining E3 $\alpha$  ubiquitin ligase activity, a polypeptide having no defined activity and encoded by a nucleotide sequence that hybridizes under highly stringent conditions to SEQ ID NO:3, is unpredictable and the experimentation left to those skilled in the art is unnecessarily, and improperly, extensive and undue. The scope of the claims must bear a reasonable correlation with the scope of enablement (In re Fisher, 166 USPQ 19 24 (CCPA 1970)).

Furthermore, claim 1 comprises nucleotide sequences encoding polypeptides having E3 $\alpha$  ubiquitin ligase activity and having no defined activity. Therefore, the breadth of these claims is much larger than the scope enabled by the specification. The specification does not teach how to use polypeptides having no known function. The state of the art does allow the predictability of the properties based on a given structure.

Without sufficient guidance, beyond that provided, one of ordinary skill in the art would not know how to use nucleotides sequences encoding polypeptides with an undefined function. Therefore, the experimentation left to those skilled in the art is unnecessarily, and improperly, extensive and undue. The scope of the claims must bear a reasonable correlation with the scope of enablement (In re Fisher, 166 USPQ 19 24 (CCPA 1970)).

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-8, 10, 11, 46-48, 59 and 60 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 1 and 3 recite "highly stringent conditions". Said conditions are defined by non-limiting examples, rendering the metes and bounds of the claim unascertainable (specification, pages 14-16). Claims 1 and 3 further recite "a nucleotide sequence complementary to any of". The degree of complementarity is not defined, rendering the claim unclear. Furthermore, SEQ ID NO:3 comprises both coding sequence and its complement. Therefore, reciting hybridizes to "SEQ ID NO:3" as opposed "the complement thereof" is sufficient.

Claims 2 and 3 recite "the polypeptide has an activity of the polypeptide set forth in SEQ ID NO:4". Such polypeptide can have various activities, including E3 $\alpha$  activity, immunogenic activity, etc (specification, page 25, lines 24-32). Without defining the activity, it is impossible to know the metes and bounds of the claims.

Claim 2 recites "a nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:3 encoding a polypeptide fragment of at least about 25 amino acid residues" and "a nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:3, or (a)-(c) comprising a fragment of at least about 16 nucleotides". The language is confusing because SEQ ID NO:3 is said entire sequence, it cannot comprise only a fragment thereof. Amending the claim to recite a fragment of SEQ ID NO:3 ..., for example is suggested.

Claim 59 recites "variant or homolog". Neither term is defined by the specification and has different definitions in the art.

Claims not specifically discussed above are rejected as dependent from the rejected base claim.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 3-8, 10, 1146-48, 59 and 60 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kwon et al.

Kwon et al. (PNAS, 1998, Vol. 95, pages 7898-7903, form PTO-1449 filed 4/30/04, reference C15) teaches the mouse ortholog of human ubiquitin ligase, huE3 $\alpha$ , having the amino acid sequence consisting of 1757 amino acid residues that is 45.8% identical to SEQ ID NO:4 of the instant invention and a nucleotide sequence encoding thereof. Said nucleotide sequence is construed as encoding polypeptides having the amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO:4 with at least one conservative or any substitution, insertion, deletion, truncation or the combination of the above or as variant or homolog thereof.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Elizabeth Slobodyansky, PhD whose telephone number is 571-272-0941. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 10:00 - 6:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ponnathapura Achutamurthy, PhD can be reached on 571-272-0928. The

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fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "E. Slobodyansky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of the last name being a large, stylized capital 'S'.

Elizabeth Slobodyansky, PhD

Primary Examiner

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June 25, 2006